

1389. 2y

THE
EXCELLENCE
OF THE
BRITISH CONSTITUTION,
&c. &c.

CONSISTING OF EXTRACTS

FROM

PIGOTT, BARLOW, &c.

PRINTED FOR

CITIZEN LEE, AT THE BRITISH TREE OF LIBERTY,

Transplanted from the Haymarket, to No. 444, Strand,
opposite Buckingham-street.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



Equal.—After laying down the great fundamental principle, *that all men are equal in their rights*, it ought to be the invariable object of the social compact to insure the exercise of that equality, by rendering them as equal in all sorts of enjoyments, as can possibly be consistent with good order, industry, and the reward of merit. Every individual ought to be rendered as independent of every other individual as possible, and at the same time as dependent as possible on the whole community.

BARLOW.

Financier.—a Chancellor of the Exchequer who excels in taking money from the people's pocket in the easiest and *genteel*est manner. When it is necessary to raise a loan, or to levy taxes, the minister, like the frog in the fable, ready

41. 11. 6. 2y.

to burst with the sense of his own dignity and importance, collects around him the monied men of the city, and attends to their different propositions with all the affected gravity of his station. He then consults one confidential and experienced friend, who is always employed on these occasions, whose advice he uniformly follows, and then, wrapt up in the mantle of pride and consequence, he goes down to the House of Commons, opens his budget in an eloquent, elaborate speech, in which he shines with borrowed feathers, and thus, on the merit of another, Mr. Pitt acquires the *reputation* of a most accurate calculator, of an excellent *Financier*.
 PIGOTT.

Foppery (political). When I see a man in private life assuming an external splendour for the sake of gaining attention, I cannot but feel it an insult offered to my understanding ; because it is saying to me, that I have not discernment enough to distinguish his merit, without this kind of *ecce signum* ; and when an officer of government exhibits himself in the *foppery of a puppet*, and is drawn by six or eight horses, where two would be really more convenient to himself, I am grieved at the insult offered to the nation, and at their stupidity in not perceiving it : for the language of the mummery is simply this, that the officer cannot rely upon his own personal dignity as a title to respect, nor the laws be trusted to their own justice to insure their execution. It is a full acknowledgment on his part, that the government is bad, and that he is obliged to dazzle the eyes of the people to prevent their discovering the cheat. When a set of Judges on the bench take the pains to shroud their head and shoulders in a *fl*are of horse-hair, in order to resemble the bird of wisdom, it raises a strong suspicion, that they mean to palm upon us the emblem for the reality.

BARLOW.

Gaming,—a vice originating in avarice, almost universally predominant. The example of the great serves to encourage it, the lower classes being never very slow in endeavours to imitate their superiors. Gaming, therefore, rages through all ranks and conditions—from the tennis-

court in James's-street, to the skittle-alleys in St. George's-fields;—from the speculating, peculating adventurer, who, at *one stroke* with the Minister, gains 50,000*l.* by the purchase of a lottery, down to the unfortunate female servant, who pawns to her last rag to ensure the number of which she dreamt last night. It is impossible for a *gambler* to risque his money so disadvantageously as in lotteries; but they are dressed up in a meretricious garb, to entrap the ignorant and inexperienced.

Nothing can betray the profligacy of a minister more, than his everlasting recourse to this murderous instrument of revenue, this encouragement which he annually holds forth to the depravation of morals, and to the general injury of society. But what signify the morals of the people? It is his business to corrupt them; for he knows full well, that if the people had any morals, they would soon *hurl him* from his *place*; for which reason *gaming* and all other enormities are encouraged, which *bring in grist to his mill*, and which have a tendency to preserve his authority.

FIGOTT.

Government,—an universal contract, the object of which is the happiness of the state for whose benefit it was formed.

Whenever the object is not attained, it is *natural, lawful* and *right* to alter the *government*, and the only competent judges in these cases are the people themselves, who, while they enjoy plenty, security, and freedom, will necessarily support the system which insures to them those blessings, and who, by a parity of reasoning, will murmur and complain, and at length resist, when they find themselves oppressed by sumptuary and sanguinary laws, and borne down by a weight of taxation, that renders all their industry and labour fruitless.

“That *government* is best which the people think so, and *they*, not *I*, are the *natural, lawful*, and *competent* judges of this matter.” Burke's Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents.

Economy is the wisest principle of all virtuous *governments*. Whenever we perceive a departure from this principle, and a nation providing luxuriously for myriads of pensioners and placemen, by exorbitant salaries, and when

we hear those minions asserting their *well-earned* claims (which consist merely in the fawning sycophancy of courtiers) to those salaries, boasting of them as a reward conferred on their *services* by the *best of princes*; (the old hackneyed language of pensioned slaves,) although it be *from the pockets of a starving people*, and not from the *overflowing treasures* of this BEST OF PRINCES, that the payment is extorted; when we witness these GENTRY refusing to yield up the smallest part of their sinecures and *douceurs* toward the expence of the war, in which they have involved those who are suffering the most grievously and innocently from it, and when we behold the lethargy of the people, under all the bitter calamities that have been thus wantonly and barbarously inflicted on them, tamely submitting to the provoking arrogance, and glaring falsehoods with which they are insulted, we may safely say, that both the *government* and the people have reached the acmè of degeneracy and corruption; but as evil governments, in the first instance, corrupt the morals of the nation, so, by excess of their corruption, is a nation finally regenerated. So it was in France:—so will it be in England.

In monarchical states, the art of government generally consists in taking as much money as possible from one class of citizens, in order to bestow it on another class; and what *ought* to be very *extraordinary*, instead of taking it from the rich, to improve the condition of the poor, it is extorted from the poor, to pamper the luxuries of the rich. For proof of this assertion, consult the history of our civil list.

There are in print many more books on government than there are princes on the earth, yet with three or four thousand volumes on the subject, kings still appear mainly ignorant of their duties, altogether unskilled in the art of governing mankind.

“Let the good of the people be the supreme law.” Such is the fundamental maxim of nations. But the good of the people is made to consist in destroying their neighbours, and in seizing their possessions—THE RIGHTS OF WAR, Old as the world is, at this very day it would be impossible to point out one government favourable to the art of think-

ing, or to the improvement and delights of society. The nation that attempted, and is still struggling to confer this benefit on mankind, is marked out by the rest for destruction. *Government*, according to the present system, being for the advantage of the few, to the detriment of the many, the few having the *power* in their hands, are straining every nerve to increase that *power*, and to render themselves invincible; but the *natural* strength lies in the *people*, and whenever they are roused to exert it, all factitious *unnatural powers* will be at once destroyed and buried in the dust.

Of all *governments*, hereditary monarchies are certainly the most *unnatural* and preposterous; for, agreeably with this system, the chances are far more probable, that a nation be governed by folly and vice, than by wisdom and virtue, since it will hardly be denied, that the majority of the world is composed of the former. Indeed, all history confirms this TRUTH.

But there is a kind of stupid vanity in men, that inclines them to flatter the *government* under which they are born, "though it be the most servile and miserable on the earth." Modern Romans are proud of St. Peter's Church, and of their antique Grecian statues; yet it would be better for the people, that these superb monuments were a heap of ruins, if thereby they were to be better fed, or better clothed; and happier, far happier would it be for humanity, and more honourable to its character, if all the treasures of the churches were, as in France, made national property, and converted to public use.

All governments which have hitherto existed had their origin in conquest and terror. Their principle "le droit du plus fort," the right of the strongest, we have heard triumphantly boasted by the glorious republics of Greece. But what a government must that be which drove Aristides into banishment, and which condemned Phocion and Socrates to death. Yet these republics, it must be confessed, were *comparatively* excellent; far superior to the *Government* of the neighbouring monarchies. The ancient republics did not understand the representative system.

Puffendorf, in his seventh book, chap. v. *promises* to examine, which is the best form of government. He tells us, "that several have pronounced in favour of monarchy, and that others, on the contrary, are furious against kings; but that, for his own part, it would be FOREIGN from his subject to enter into the reasons of the latter;" and perhaps it would be wise in us to imitate the example of Puffendorf, and be silent; therefore we shall conclude the article on the word government, with the following allegorical fable:—

"An Eagle ruled over all the birds throughout the whole country of Oritnia; it is true, that he had no other *right* than that of his *beak* and his *claws*; but nevertheless, after having provided for his own luxuries and pleasures, he governed as well as any other *bird of prey*.——

* * * * *

Hanover.—From the year 1740 to 1756 it was a place not to be found in the map, a *poor, pitiful electorate*; but being the patrimonial territory and the electoral dominions of our Most Serene Sovereign, must be preserved as a millstone about the neck of England, the ruin of our treasury, and the grave of Britons. Thus happy are we in our German connections.

PIGOTT.

Laws (transgression of the)—an exertion of the natural right which every man has to a hare or a partridge belonging to his own grounds, and which destroy both his corn and grass, by the authority of Parliament.

PIGOTT.

National Debt,—three hundred and thirty-one millions of pounds sterling, which is increasing every day, and with it, as we are told, our happiness and prosperity. To give some idea of this sum, if it was laid down in guineas close together in a line, it would extend upwards of six thousand miles in length. If it was laid down in shillings, it would extend upwards of five times round the world, and would

require seventy thousand horses to draw it, at the rate of fifteen hundred weight each horse.

PIGOTT.

Opposition,—a set of men leagued to thwart the measures of the reigning minister; contriving false standards of popular freedom to the nation, and then deceiving them; pretending to sacrifice their interest to the people's good, but in fact *sacrificing* nothing but *principles* and *veracity*. The nation ought, in golden letters, to place before their eyes the fable of the lark and her young ones.

PIGOTT.

Patron,—one who countenances the apostate, protects the informer, and supports the dependant; whose patronage extends not to the friend of virtue, the opposer of tyranny, or the lover of justice; but, on the contrary, seeks to enrich the man who sells his country for a bribe, or courts the wretch who disowns his principles for the pavilion of ambition.

PIGOTT.

Predecessors.—To suppose that our predecessors were wiser than ourselves, is not an extraordinary thing, though the opinion may be ill founded; but to suppose that they can have left us a better system of political regulations than we can make for ourselves, is to ascribe to them a degree of discernment to which our own bears no comparison; it supposes them to have known our condition by prophecy, better than we can know it by experience.

BARLOW.

Property.—The reason why property has been considered as conveying additional rights to the possessor in matters of government, is the same as has blinded the understandings of men relative to the whole order of nature in society. It is one of those appendages of monarchy and oligarchy, which teaches, that the object of government is to increase the splendour of the few and the misfortunes of the many; and every step that such governments take, has a tendency to counteract the equality of rights, by destroying the equality of enjoyments.

BARLOW.

Probable.—Among the probable evils resulting from the Kingly office, the principal one, and indeed the only one that need to be mentioned, is the chance of its being held by a *weak or a wicked* man: where the office is hereditary, it is scarcely to be expected but that this should be always the case. Considering the birth and education of Princes, the chance of finding one with practical common sense, is hardly to be reckoned among possible events; nor is the probability less strong against their having virtues. The temptations to wickedness, arising from their situation, are too powerful to be resisted: the persuasive arts of all their flatterers, the companions of their youth, the ministers of their pleasures, and every person with whom they ever converse, are necessarily employed to induce them to increase their revenue, by oppressing the People, whom they are taught, from their cradle, to consider as beasts of burthen: and what must almost insure the triumph of wickedness in their tempers, is the idea that they are totally and for ever without restraint. This is an allurements to vice, that even men of sense could scarcely resist. Impress it on the mind of any man, that he *can do no wrong*, and he will soon convince you of your mistake.

BARLOW.

Representative.—one who neither cares for your interests nor your welfare, provided he can get a share of the general plunder. If he can *not* get a share, he becomes all at once a flaming patriot, harangues against corruption and venality, till, like the noisy mastiff, he receives an opiate morsel from the thieves whom he was placed there to guard against. This puts me in mind of boys running after a coach, who, when they are driven away by those who have already got a place, bawl out, Hilloa, Coachman! whip behind!

PIGOTT.



On Saturday, the 17th of October, will be published,

REMEDIES FOR STATE DISEASES.